AMENDMENTS

In the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for recognizing and rectifying etch-critical regions, said method comprising:

determining ~~accessing~~ the data structure of a layout;

determining ~~accessing~~ the data structure of the configuration elements arranged in a plane of the layout; ~~and~~

~~using the measures of a program procedure,~~

determining the critical regions between the configuration elements~~,~~;

modifying the critical regions; and

visually displaying the modified critical regions,

wherein the determining of the critical regions is ~~defined by~~ at least partially based upon a height and a spacing of ~~the~~ a coating to be etched off.

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the modifying of the critical regions is undertaken so that no under-etching ~~can be formed~~ occurs, and said modified critical regions ~~being~~ are integrated into the existing data structure of the layout.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the critical ~~region is~~ regions are adjustable by an admissible, fabrication-oriented, minimal spacing between the configuration elements.

5. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein the critical regions between the configuration elements are filled out by polygons so that the critical regions between the configuration elements are avoided.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 5, wherein the polygons of the critical regions are limited given possible superimpositions of the configuration elements.

7. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 6, wherein the polygons of the critical regions are enlarged slightly so that the edges of the polygons superimpose with the edges of the configuration elements.

8. (New) The method according to claim 1, further comprising scanning the data structure of the layout using an optical scanner.